



Working to Increase Access to Essential Medicines and Improve the Rational Use of Medicines

Health Action International (HAI)

Stichting Health Action International is a Dutch civil society Non-Government Organisation (NGO), with a coordinating office (HAI Global) in Amsterdam and partner regional offices Africa (Nairobi), Asia Pacific (Colombo), Latin America (Lima) and Europe (Amsterdam). Although primarily a Dutch organization, HAI is recognised for its global medicines policy expertise and as a non-profit, independent, worldwide network of over 200 members including consumer groups, public interest NGOs, health care providers, academics, media and individuals in more than 70 countries.



Dutch Government rejects HAI's MFS II Subsidy Application

Expertise falls by the wayside

5 November 2010- The Netherlands Medicines and Development Partnership (NMDP) MFS II funding proposal, submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has so far been rejected. NMDP comprises three Dutch development organisations - Health Action International (HAI), Wemos and Health[e]Foundation and together submitted a Global proposal, with HAI as the lead organisation.

Health Action International believes that structural policy intervention is a core element of sustainable contributions to health and development. It works globally, regionally and nationally with civil society to achieve policy results that have long-lasting and significant impact on the health of the poor and marginalised. HAI is a strategic partner of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a civil society member of the European Medicines Agency, is in Official Relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and works with WHO regional offices throughout the world.

HAI has always maintained an independent position and is an organisation that represents the best in modern development thinking through pursuit of sustainable access to essential medicines and their rational use. HAI's expertise and international legitimacy is unchallenged. We are extremely disappointed at the ministry's decision, who we see as a core ally in the fight against poverty and disease. We will now have to reflect on how HAI's international programme can be maintained, but without the support of the Ministry there is a very real possibility that thirty years experience in pharmaceutical policy, capacity building expertise and a global network of civil society advocacy will be lost.

Winner of the 2010 HAI Europe Association Essay Writing Competition

We are pleased to announce that Ms Fiona Rae has been selected as the winner of the HAI Europe Association Essay Writing Competition 2010.

This competition was open to all those resident in the European region who are in, or have completed, full time education in the last eight years. Contestants were invited to write a 1500-2000 word essay on one of the three pillars of HAI work :

- Access to medicine
- Rational use of medicine
- Democratisation of medicine policy

Ms Rae is a medical student at the University of Edinburgh and came to the HAI Europe Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Amsterdam in October to present her essay "Intellectual Property Rights versus the Right to Access Essential Medicines: Why do patents still pose a threat to drug access after the Doha Declaration ?".

The entries received were of high quality but the contest judges were especially impressed by the depth and scope of Ms Rae's analysis.

Her winning essay can be read [here](#), and the presentation she gave at the AGM can be accessed [here](#).

Can We Afford the Current Model of Medical Innovation? Towards New Models of Innovation

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Thijs Berman MEP, Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats
Eva Joly MEP, The Greens/EFA
Carl Schlyter MEP, The Greens /EFA and on behalf of the
European Parliament Working Group on Innovation, Access to Medicines and
Poverty-Related Diseases

[Conference program and concept note](#)

To register for this event, please complete and return [this registration form](#) by e-mail to Marine Avrillon at marine@haieurope.org

HAI Europe Statement

EU citizens get a voice in pharmacovigilance

30 September 2010 – The monitoring of medicines safety in the Europe Union (EU) took a step forward following last week's approval by Parliament of the amendments to EU legislation on Pharmacovigilance. One notable and positive outcome is the legal provision that will enable patients and consumers to directly report their adverse reactions to medicines. [Read More](#)

HAI Europe reveals new data on financial transparency of patient and consumer organisations

11 August 2010 - HAI Europe Research Article – [Patient & Consumer Organisations at the EMA: Financial Disclosure & Transparency](#). Written by Katrina Perehudoff and Teresa Leonardo Alves

11 August 2010 - HAI Europe Factsheet – [Patient & Consumer Organisations at the EMA: Financial Disclosure & Transparency](#)

Health Action International at the 63rd World Health Assembly

Press release

22 May 2010, Geneva- This years' World Health Assembly (WHA) was historic. Health Action International (HAI) followed some of the most controversial issues that were up for discussion on this ambitious agenda: the debates and action around agenda items 11.3 Global Strategy and Plan of Action (GSPA) on Public Health Innovation and Intellectual Property, and 11.20 Counterfeit Medical Products. On both issues, the debate played out more or less with opposing positions taken by Northern and Southern countries. [Read more](#)

Health Action International at the 63rd World Health Assembly

Interventions

19 May 2010, Geneva - As HAI is an NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization, we took the opportunity to submit two NGO intervention texts for consideration at the WHA. However, unfortunately HAI was not able to deliver either of the interventions during the Committee sessions. Please click on the following links to see the submissions on the [Global Strategy and Plan of Action \(GSPA\) on Public Health Innovation and Intellectual Property](#) and [Counterfeit Medical Products](#)

HAI Global Statement

Civil society freedoms endangered by anonymous threats: Stifling debate about public health in the H1N1 pandemic

11 May 2010 - Health Action International (HAI) Global firmly supports freedom of expression and the freedom of civil society to carry out their work uninhibited by threats or intimidation. We are deeply troubled by the anonymous threats made against the Coordinator of our network partner, AIS (HAI) Bolivia following public statements about the H1N1 influenza vaccine debate. [Read more](#)

Global pill price 'snapshot' reveals large differences in the price of ciprofloxacin



On 30 November 2009, individuals from Health Action International's extended network carried out a "snapshot" survey of the price that patients have to pay for ciprofloxacin, a commonly used off-patent antibiotic, in their nearest private retail pharmacy.

To follow up the survey, HAI Global developed an **interactive map** available at <http://www.haiweb.org/medicineprices/> to show the cost of a course of ciprofloxacin (14 tabs; in US\$), for both the originator brand and lowest priced generic in the 93 countries that were surveyed. This map, along with all the survey results went live on Monday 11 January 2010.

On the website you can also access a four-page briefing note, which includes an analysis of the results and recommendations. This briefing note is available in English, French, Spanish and Russian. Briefing notes with results from geographic regions are also available.

To download the press release, click on this link <http://www.haiweb.org/medicineprices/05012010/PressRelease.pdf>

Statement HAI Europe is granted full membership by the European Medicines Agency

24 March 2010 – Health Action International (HAI) Europe has been closely monitoring the European Medicines Agency's policies and developments for several years. The HAI network has frequently contributed to EMA consultations, played a role in reviewing medicines information for the public, and championed the interests of European citizens and public health in medicines policy. [Read more](#)

Final Report: Impact of the EU-Andean Trade Agreements on Access to Medicines in Peru

11 November 2009 - This study carried out by the IFARMA foundation in Colombia was commissioned by the EU-CAN Alliance for Access to Medicines and has now been published by HAI Europe. The study evaluates the potential impact on access to medicines in Peru from the intellectual property measures proposed by the European Union as part of the trade agreement being negotiated between the EU and some Andean countries. It specifically assesses the impact of increasing the effective duration of pharmaceutical patents and test data protection, as proposed by the EU in February 2009. [Download here](#). [Full report in Spanish](#).

HAI Europe Open Seminar 23 October 2009 Brussels

EU Policy in Action: In whose Interests?

There is often a divergence between policy and action in political decision-making. In order to assess the effectiveness of policies, it is essential to understand how and why decisions are made in reality. Medicines' policy in the European Union represents a prime example of such divergence and HAI Europe's campaigns have sought to research and analyse areas of incoherence in order to present policy recommendations that ensure EU policies match its actions.

This year's HAI Europe Open Seminar examined the European Union's policies and actions in relation to medicines and provide an opportunity for stakeholders to publicly debate their views. The event included two panels:

Panel 1: Unwrapping the Pharma Package: What's in it for Consumers?

This panel looked at two of the main components of the Pharmaceuticals package, the 'Information to patients' directive and the Pharmacovigilance directive. The panel also discussed the roles played by various EU decision-making bodies and stakeholders in the development and negotiation of the Pharmaceuticals package.

Panel 2: Trading Away Access to Medicines

This panel discussed the impact of the EU's trade agenda in relation to access to medicines. Panellists addressed intellectual property (IP) rights and IP enforcement issues along with specific trade agreements, notably those between the EU and Andean Community (CAN) countries.

HAI Europe would like to thank all the speakers and respondents that

took part in the event and everyone who attended the sessions and contributed to the debate.
Please find here,, the [programme](#), [abstracts](#), and [speaker biographies](#) and the presentations (below):

Panel One

Jorg Schaaber - [A view of the EU Commission's work on medicines' policy, 1999-2009](#)

Barbara Mintzes - [The Information to Patients Directive](#)

Florence Vandeveld - [The Pharmacovigilance Directive](#)

Panel Two

Rohit Malpani - [Developments in the politics of Intellectual Property Rights and the role of the EU](#)

Sophie Bloemen - [EU Trade Agreements with Andean Countries and their impact on access to medicines](#)

Health Action International and Oxfam International briefing paper Trading Away Access to Medicines How the European Union's trade agenda has taken a wrong turn

20 October 2009- Insufficient innovation and a lack of access to affordable medicines are major barriers to achieving the right to health in developing countries. The European Commission (EC) could play a leading role in working with developing countries to improve innovation and access to medicines. Instead, the EC has implemented a trade agenda that favors the commercial interests of the multinational pharmaceutical industry over the needs of people in developing countries.

[Download](#). Plus, [Full Report in French](#) and [Full Report in Spanish](#)

13 November 2009 - [Joint declaration from Oxfam, Health Action International and Médecins Sans Frontières](#) in [Spanish](#)

HAI Europe Workshop Medicines in Portugal: Better Access and Independent Information

3 September 2009- Health Action International (Europe) is holding a two-day workshop, in Lisbon on Thursday, 15 October and Friday, 16 October 2009. For more information, please see the [programme](#) and to register [click here](#).

HAI Europe Statement

The tide is turning against pharmaceutical ads

11 August 2009 - Controversy over direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) of prescription medicines is intensifying and nowhere more so than in the United States, one of only two countries where the practice is currently permitted. A number of recent news articles have underlined growing dissatisfaction with DTCA. [Read more](#)

HAI Europe Statement

Protect legitimate trade in essential medicines

11 August 2009 - As the dispute continues over the seizures of legitimate generic medicines in transit (see recent articles in [Wall Street Journal](#), [Financial Times](#), [PharmaTimes](#), and [SCRIP World Pharmaceutical News](#)), Health Action International continues to call for the European Union to revisit EU regulation 1383/2003, which has perpetuated the dangerous confusion between counterfeit pharmaceutical products and legitimate generic medicines. [Read more](#)

HAI Europe Statement

DG Competition Pharmaceutical Sector Inquiry- Final Report

10 August 2009 - The final report of DG Competition on the [Pharmaceutical Sector Inquiry](#) (8 July 2009) confirms the preliminary findings: not only is the patent system being structurally misused to delay and deter generic competition, but it is also preventing innovation. [Read more](#)

Joint press release: Making the Right Choice in Health Information

16 June 2009- A large alliance of European health stakeholders welcome Health Ministers' critical conclusions on the proposed Directive "Information to the general public on medicinal products subject to medical prescription". [Read more](#)

Controversial Discussions at 62nd WHA: Finalising the Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property

Please read the [statement delivered by HAI](#) on the concerns regarding the resolution on the Global Strategy and Plan of Action, discussed at WHA on Thursday 21 May and [the press release](#) on the proposed Essential Health and Biomedical Research & Development Treaty.

BRIEFING

62nd World Health Assembly

From Education to Regulation: Innovative Tools for the Rational Use of Medicines

WHO/HAI Pilot Manual aims to help Medical and Pharmacy students understand and respond to Pharmaceutical Promotion

Medicines are a vital part of improving and maintaining health and healthcare professionals, such as doctors and pharmacists, play a key role in ensuring that medicines are prescribed and used rationally. However, numerous concerns have been raised about the relationship between healthcare professionals and the pharmaceutical industry - particularly the industry's influence on prescribing and dispensing decisions. This influence can lead to less than optimal treatment choices and can even be detrimental to patient health.

Research shows that while in training, many healthcare professionals receive little or no instruction on how to assess pharmaceutical promotion and how to understand its often subtle influence on their behaviour. In response, WHO and HAI have developed a new publication: Understanding and Responding to Pharmaceutical Promotion – A Practical Guide. This draft manual can assist educators and healthcare professionals in teaching medical and pharmacy students about pharmaceutical promotion.

On Wednesday, 20 May, Health Action International (HAI) held a Technical Briefing at the 62nd World Health Assembly, **From Education to Regulation: Innovative Tools for the Rational Use of Medicines** to present new initiatives aimed at improving public health by addressing the consequences of unethical pharmaceutical promotion. The meeting attracted a range of country delegations, health professionals, civil society organisations, medical and pharmacy students, academics and representatives from the pharmaceutical industry.

To learn more about the manual and related work on pharmaceutical promotion, please review the event materials from the briefing session. [Download the invitation](#), [programme](#), and the [event memo](#). Download the presentations below:

[Carlos Fidel Berrios Cruz](#), MD, MPH, Director of Projects, Farmacéuticos Mundi, Managua, Nicaragua and member, AIS-Nicaragua (HAI-Nicaragua)

[Barbara Mintzes](#), PhD, (Manual editor), HAI Global, Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Assistant Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Therapeutics Initiative, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

[Dee Mangin](#), (Manual editor), MB, ChB, DPH, Associate Professor and Director, Primary Care Research Unit, Department of Public Health and General Practice, University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand

[Carole Piriou](#), HAI-Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

[Lilia Ziganshina](#), MD, PhD, Doctor of Sciences, Professor, Kazan State Medical Academy, Russia and HAI Global, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Please [click here to download Sample Chapter 3](#), Analysing pharmaceutical advertisements in medical journals, by Joel Lexchin

Read HAI Europe's contribution to the EPHA website '[Intellectual Property and Competition in European and global pharmaceutical markets](#)', by Sophie Bloemen, European Project Officer.

HAI Briefing at World Health Assembly

HAI Global was pleased to host a seminar on the evening of 21st May at the WHA.

Co-chaired by Hans Hogerzeil (WHO) and Tim Reed (HAI Global) and effectively a seminar in two parts, the first session featured the launch of the 2nd edition of the pricing survey manual - Measuring medicine prices, availability, affordability and price components. This flagship collaboration with WHO is now in its ninth year and speakers outlined core components of the new manual, findings and in-country experience. Part two of the seminar featured speakers from all four HAI regional offices and WHO and addressed the immense depth and breadth of HAI's thematic work.

Download the presentations here:

- Marg Ewen (HAI Global): [Medicine Pricing Matters](#)
- Rania Bader (HAI Consultant, Jordan): [Civil Society mobilisation in Jordan and their engagement in medicines pricing policy](#)
- Patrick Mubangizi (HAI Africa): [Increasing access to essential medicines in Africa through collaboration with governments, CSOs and WHO](#)
- Jinani Jayasekera (HAI Asia Pacific): [HAI Asia Pacific regional perspective on Medicines Financing Systems](#)
- Teresa Alves (HAI Europe): [Patient Information and Direct-to-Consumer Advertising in the EU](#)
- German Holguin (HAI Latin America): [Free Trade Agreements and Access to Medicines](#)
- Kathy Holloway (WHO): [Update on progress with RUM Resolution](#)

Chairs: Hans Hogerzeil (WHO) Tim Reed (HAI Global)

IGWG IIbis at WHO in Geneva.

The IGWG IIbis took place from 25th of April to 2nd of May at the WHO headquarters in Geneva. During this extra round of the International Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property country delegates were asked to try to find a consensus on the final document to be ratified at the WHA in the end of May. HAI was present with delegates from the different regions, spearheading a strong civil society voice.

To read the HAI statement presented by Dr Christian Wagner-Ahlfs, [click here](#)

For more information read the [HAI-Europe statement here](#)

For the positions of the other regions see:

http://haiweb.org/02_focus_b-2007_2.htm and of our partners see:

http://haiweb.org/02_focus_b-2007_4.htm.

Court case on direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) in Canada

With the European Commission's consultation on 'patient information' - or advertising by any other name - nearing its conclusion, and the possibility of a legislative proposal to introduce DTCA looming, what is happening elsewhere? In Canada, a major media company, CanWest MediaWorks is suing the federal government, claiming that the law prohibiting DTCA infringes on its freedom of expression. [Read more about it here](#)

EU Commission's proposal slated Overwhelming response by interested groups and concerned citizens

In the consultation published on 5 February 2008 the Commission proposed legal changes that would allow pharmaceutical companies to communicate directly to the public about prescription medicines. Hence, the Commission (through DG Enterprise and Industry) seems keen to maintain its project to deregulate direct-to-consumer advertising by pharmaceutical companies.

However, the reactions from public health related groups, patients, consumers, healthcare professionals and interested experts to the most recent EU Commission proposal have been overwhelmingly critical.

[Read the responses here](#)

Should pharmaceutical companies enjoy greater legal freedoms to provide prescription drug information directly to the public in line with new EU proposals?

What is your opinion? We invite you to answer the BMJ poll online and to vote for NO at <http://www.bmj.com/#poll>

An article by Tessa Richards in the British Medical Journal calls upon readers to “grasp the opportunity to respond to a controversial EU proposal to allow drug companies to provide information on prescription only drugs directly to the public”.

[Read all about it here](#)

The winning 350-word essays

The winning 350-word essays in response to the 'call for abstracts' on Pharmageddon? "the prospect of a world in which medicines and medicine produce more ill-health than health, and when medical progress does more harm than good" have now been listed on the Social Audit website.

Please see: <http://www.socialaudit.org.uk/6080326.htm>

GlaxoSmithKline knew its drug increased the likelihood of suicide among teenagers, says UK government

The U.K. newspaper, The Guardian, [reports](#) on 6 March that new legislation will be introduced by the end of the year placing a greater obligation on companies to disclose results of trials.

[Read comment](#) from Social Audit

Pharmacovigilance and patient safety: no to deregulation

The EU commission is working on a Directive concerning pharmacovigilance. Again, it seems as if the public health objective is not considered as the most important one by DG Enterprise.

[HAI press release](#)

[HAI response to consultation](#)

Dutch Health NGO granted Official Relations with World Health Organisation

... to read the full story [click here](#)

Nelie Kroes looks into competition in pharmaceutical sector

Amsterdam, January 18 - HAI Europe welcomes the investigation launched into the pharmaceuticals sector by the DG Competition of the European Commission. On the 16th of January antitrust regulators raided several of the largest pharmaceutical companies in Europe.

This investigation is a response of the Commission to indications that competition in the European pharmaceuticals market is not working well: lack of innovative medicines being brought into the market, and delays in the registration and commercialization of generics. The inquiry will investigate the factors contributing to the current situation.

The commission suspects that the companies in question, either by misusing patent rights or recurring to vexatious litigation and other means, have made it extremely difficult for other generic manufacturers to enter the European market.

HAI Europe welcomes the move taken by the Commission in defending consumer and patient rights and hopes that the results of the enquiry will lead towards ensuring equitable access to essential medicines within the European Region.

Children's medicines

HAI welcomes the overriding aim of the selection of essential medicines for children as a contribution to the improvement of global public health, specifically in children. However, the selection of essential medicines for children outlined in the un-edited report of the first meeting of the subcommittee of the Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines raises some concerns.

[Click on here to read more](#)

Governments drive R&D to meet real health needs - changes in sight?

Amsterdam 10 November 2007 – The World Health Organisation (WHO) Intergovernmental Working Group for Public Health, Innovation and International Property (IGWG) has met over the past week in Geneva. The group, convened to discuss improved medicines research and development for the world's poor countries, agreed on basic principles for a Global Strategy and Action Plan.

For more information, please read the [press release](#)

Time to say "No thanks"?

Family physicians have the right and the obligation to receive their education and information in an environment free from the influence of marketing strategists. A recent article published in the Canadian Family Physician outlines the pitfalls involved in the medical world's reliance on funding of continued medical education by the pharmaceutical industry.

Article: <http://www.cfp.ca/cgi/content/full/53/10/1635>

Bibliographie: <http://www.cfp.ca/cgi/content/full/53/10/1635/DC1>

Olle Hansson Award 2007

HAI Europe is delighted at the announcement that Dr Eva Ombaka has been presented with the Olle Hansson Award for 2007. The award is given to an individual from a developing country whose work best demonstrates the qualities of Olle Hansson in promoting the rational use of medicines.

Originally from Tanzania, Dr Ombaka has become internationally renowned in her work for the Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) promoting the WHO goals of 'Access to Essential Medicines' and 'Rational Use of Medicines'. Many HAI people working in Europe will know of Dr Ombaka's tireless (and cheerful!) input at conferences and at World Health Assemblies.

For further information please read the HAI News article

<http://www.haiap.org/news&events.html>

Rational Use of Medicines: back on track

On 18 May 2007, the 60th WHA approved the Resolution on Rational Use of Medicines. This resolution calls for an integrated health-systems approach to the rational use of medicines and urges Member States to set a national body aimed at monitoring and promoting the rational use of medicines.

In addition, it advocates for a multidisciplinary approach among interested parties, as well as the engagement of civil society. Most notably, it urges Member States to enact and enforce legislation to ban unethical drug promotion, as well as calling for governments to work on the provision of independent information.

HAI has been involved in the writing up of this resolution since its inception. We have also lobbied actively for its approval, as we recognize that there is a lot to be done in what concerns the rational use of medicines. The foundation has now been laid for future work in this field and we shall be looking forward to the rolling out and implementation of the resolution.

As a preparatory activity, HAI organized, jointly with WHO, EPN and ReAct a briefing on 15 May entitled Saving lives, Saving money, achieving the rational use of medicines. The event was well attended and highlighted the importance of the resolution being proposed and its potential impact on health outcomes.

The presentations from that briefing are [now available here](#).

For the resolution, [click here](#)

For the report on the Progress in the rational use of medicines, [click here](#)

HAI at the 60th World Health Assembly

HAI is pleased to support the Rational Use of Medicines (RUM) Resolution at the forthcoming World Health Assembly in Geneva. In partnership with the WHO, the Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network, and ReAct, HAI has produced a [Briefing Paper](#) for distribution at the WHA, and will be participants in the Briefing Session on Tuesday 15 May. The programme for this session is available [here](#) as well as [the accompanying poster](#).

HAI Response to EU Consultation on Patient Health Information:

No role for industry in disease and comparative treatment information

The European Commission has just carried out a consultation on two reports produced by the Pharmaceutical Forum's Working Group on Patient Information. These include model patient information on diabetes and a set of information quality criteria. The Pharmaceutical Forum is heavily dominated by the pharmaceutical industry, and a key aim of this initiative is to involve industry in providing disease and treatment 'information' to the public – paving the way for direct-to-consumer advertising.

HAI-Europe's response stresses that the pharmaceutical industry has no role in providing the public with comparative treatment information, or information on disease epidemiology or prognosis because of inherent conflicts of interest. It also raises concerns about the legitimacy of this process. [Read our full response here](#)

HAI Europe Conference 2006

HAI Europe thanks all those who helped to celebrate its 25th Anniversary by attending the special jubilee conference 'Pills, Politics and Practice' in Amsterdam on 26-27th October 2006 ([For programme click here](#)). The report on the conference proceedings can now be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

These proceedings give further links to the speakers' biographies. For an overview of those who registered participation at the conference please [click here](#).

If you would like to obtain a copy of the special conference publication 'Pills, Politics and Practice' which was distributed to all participants during the conference and which featured some of the people who have made HAI a leading NGO worldwide on pharmaceutical policy issues, then please contact the HAI Europe secretary, Rose de Groot, on rose@haiweb.org.

Educating medical and pharmacy students about drug promotion

An editorial in the November 2006 issue of the open-access journal PLoS Medicine highlights the need to educate health professionals about drug and device medicine and provides key recommendations for how this education should be carried out. Four groups are involved in this call to action: the American Medical Students' Association, Healthy Skepticism, No Free Lunch and PharmAware. [See full article](#)

HAI-Europe and WHO are jointly collaborating on a project, together with an international team of educators, to develop and field test an educational manual for medical and pharmacy students on drug promotion. A global survey of educational initiatives carried out as part of this project describes the work of 228 educators from 64 countries. There are many individual initiatives to educate students about the influence of drug promotion on professional practice, but they remain marginal in most cases to core curricula, with students in most cases devoting one half day or less to this topic during their professional training. [See full survey report](#)

EMA implementation of transparency regulations called into question

11th October 2006 – A broad definition of commercial confidentiality is the key barrier to public access to information on the safety and effectiveness of medicines, leaving European citizens at greater risk for otherwise preventable harm.

For more information, please read the [press release](#)

HAI Europe responds to EU Pharmaceutical Forum initiative: is this advertising disguised as health information?

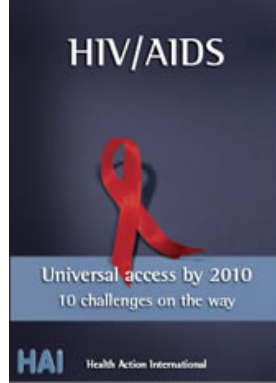
Health Action International Europe (HAI-E), the International Society of Drug Bulletins (ISDB), the Association Internationale de la Mutualité (AIM), the Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC), and the Medicines in Europe Forum (MIEF) have endorsed a joint declaration on the provision of relevant health information to citizens, to be presented on the occasion of the meeting of the European's Commission Pharmaceutical Forum.

Considering that health information is a fundamental and necessary part of healthcare, the organisations call for a clear distinction between information and advertising disguised as "information". They warn of the inherent conflicts of interest of pharmaceutical companies which are unable to provide unbiased comparative information on available drug and non-drug treatment alternatives.

For more information, please read the [press release](#) or [download the declaration](#).

HIV/AIDS Universal Access by 2010 [ten challenges on the way](#)

If universal access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) by 2010 is to be achieved, all those engaged in implementation - at every level - must address challenges. HAI has developed a policy brief which highlights 10 challenges on the way to achieving universal access to ART by 2010. Healthworkers, policy makers and ART users from 14 countries identified these challenges during rapid appraisal assessments conducted by HAI, the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) and the University of Amsterdam. [Read the brief](#).



[Now in Spanish: Acceso Universal para el 2010 10 retos en el camino](#)

Report from the HAI Seminar on Risk communication with patients

This seminar was a by-product of HAI Europe's participation in the Working Group with Patients' and Consumers' Groups in the European Medicines Agency (EMA). One area of work of this Working Group is Pharmacovigilance, information and communication about safety issues, Adverse Drug Reactions (ADR) of medicines and reporting systems for ADR.

The issue of communication with the public and patients about the positive and negative effects of medicines involves both patients' and consumers' groups and so HAI Europe arranged an additional seminar in London for the members of this Working Group who came together for the EMA meeting.

[Read more](#)

HAI supports the Rational Use of Medicine at the WHA Executive Board.

A small HAI team stayed on after the WHA to lobby members of the Executive Board in support of the WHO secretariat's proposed resolution on the Rational Use of Medicines (RUM) last week. HAI welcomes the decision of the EB to revisit the resolution next year before it goes forward to the World Health Assembly. However, whilst the resolution passed by the EB re-establishes the Rational Use of Medicines as a core agenda item, the resolution could go much further.

[Read the press release and HAI's intervention to the Executive Board here](#)



Press Release re R&D Resolution at 59th WHA

Health Action International (HAI) applauds the decision of the World Health Assembly (WHA) to pass a resolution which calls on governments to act to boost innovative research and development (R&D) of medicines. The passing of this resolution indicates that governments recognize the crisis in R&D and the failure of current systems to effectively address health needs in developing countries. The resolution builds on the findings of the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health (CIPRH) report and acknowledges the need for immediate action.

[For full text of Press Release](#)

Pharmacovigilance in the EU

Recent high-profile drug withdrawals, such as Vioxx and Lipobay, have rightly proved to sharpened public interest in the European system of pharmacovigilance. Moreover, the tendency towards the direct promotion of medicines to consumers (especially via the internet), the limited amount of clinical trial data available to the general public, shorter approval times and the switching of prescription only medicines to over-the-counter, all add up to the need for robust post-marketing surveillance. It is therefore timely and appropriate that HAI is pleased to engage with the European Commission's (DG Enterprise) consultation on pharmacovigilance in the EU, which we argue is flawed, and certainly cannot offer the robust and responsive system that European citizens might expect, need and vote for. [Read our full response here](#)

CIPRH Report could change the lives of neglected patients

HAI is encouraged by the clear assertion in the report of the need for people oriented approaches to health policy, and that application of intellectual property rules should take account of the circumstances in which they were being used. 'Real people and not realpolitik should be the central emphasis' stated Dr. Kumuriah Balasubramaniam, Regional Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Office. [Read more](#)

Global AIDS Alliance Responds to WHO Report on Treatment Access >> [read more](#)

Survey shows some students only get 1-2 hours education about drug promotion during professional training

Education of medical and pharmacy students plays a crucial role in preparing future practitioners to respond appropriately to drug promotion. But a survey of medical and pharmacy schools, conducted by HAI and WHO in 2005, found that while most respondents included education on promotion in the required curriculum, a half a day or less was devoted to this important issue during the students' professional training. In nearly one-third of cases, medical schools devoted only 1-2 hours often within a broader course on pharmacology, clinical pharmacology or therapeutics. Few students are taught how to respond to patient requests for advertised drugs despite direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs and other promotional techniques targeting the public becoming more prevalent. These are some of the key findings in the survey report [Educational initiatives for medical and pharmacy students about drug promotion: an international cross-sectional survey](#) by Barbara Mintzes.

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